

# INVASIVE PESTS



**What are Invasive Species?** Any species non-native to the ecosystem in question and as a result can cause economic and environmental damage. Invasive species can be plants or animals, as well as other organisms such as microbes. Due to the increase in travel of people and cargo in a global society, invasive pests are an ever-increasing threat to our food and water supply, forest canopies and native wildlife habitat.

**Why are they a threat?** By being foreign to the affected ecosystem, invasive species often have no natural predators which makes them prone to extreme population growths. Invasive species are also apt to carry exotic diseases which have a crippling effect on the domestic ecosystems. They also use large amounts of California's water supply, drain minerals and nutrients from the soil, can require an increase in pesticides to eradicate them and they threaten California's agricultural crops and environment.

**What is at stake for California?** California is the largest agricultural producer in the United States with sales receipts at 32 billion dollars. In addition to large sales, California sports diversity with over four hundred commodities. Of these commodities, California is the sole producing state in twelve categories.

In addition, California has more forestland than any state except Alaska. Nearly two-billion-board feet (equivalent of 132,000 homes) of commercial lumber are produced from California's private and public

timberlands each year. California's abundant forests could provide nearly 100 percent of the state's demand for wood.

A major invasive species infestation in California is a national food security, economic and environmental danger. Early response to control and eradicate pests and diseases is critical to protecting not only our country's food supply, but also our forest, fiber, fuel and floriculture products.

**What are some real examples?** The invasive **Quagga mussel** has been positively identified in California. Because of their rapid growth rate, this species could exacerbate the problems faced by native species such as Chinook salmon and Delta smelt and can choke California's water delivery systems. Authorities are concerned that they will further spread to the lower Colorado River, where California water agencies including Imperial Irrigation District and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California have intakes.

A native of Australia, the **Light Brown Apple Moth** is an insect species recently found in eleven counties in California. This pest has a wide host range including in excess of 120 plant genera in over 50 families. In addition to direct feeding damage and increased production costs, if this infestation is not eradicated, California stands to lose export markets due to the implementation of quarantines both domestically and internationally. This pest must be eradicated to avoid the threat to other states since this is the first time the pest is in North America.

**What is the Solution?** California must invest more efforts and money in dealing with invasive species. It is a situation that both logically and financially demands attentiveness. It has been estimated that every dollar spent on pest detection saves \$24 on eradication.



## California supports:

- An early pest and disease detection program that funds state and local activities.
- A robust Cooperative Agreement for Pest Survey program.
- Incorporating the Pierce's Disease Control Program in the Farm Bill.
- Construction of a new Mediterranean Fruit Fly facility in Hawaii as a critical investment in invasive species prevention.
- Transferring agricultural inspectors from the Department of Homeland Security back to USDA to re-establish inspection and pest and disease prevention effectiveness on our borders.